

The rationale of how they could see the tremendous decline in these high-paying blue collar jobs and the reality that they seem to think it is better to import is beyond me. That is specifically exporting our dollars and our jobs overseas.

I remind our colleagues, the hard rock mining industry provides approximately 120,000 direct and indirect jobs nationwide. This proposal of the administration could eliminate 60,000 to 70,000 jobs. It is shortsighted and, once again, the White House seems to be proving it really does not care about the men and women working in America's resource industries. When we import more minerals, again, we are exporting jobs and exporting dollars. Unfortunately, the administration seems to be putting politics before policy. It may look good in the press but it would simply destroy America's mining industry by putting a billion-dollar burden on their backs and still expect them to be competitive internationally.

THE FOREST SERVICE GRINCH STEALING CHRISTMAS IN ALASKA

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I have one more short statement relative to another policy of the administration. I want to speak briefly on an issue that affects my home State of Alaska. It is coming to a head during this holiday season, but unfortunately, unless there is a legislative solution the problem will not end with Christmas but it will be a gift that will keep on giving throughout the year 1996.

The gift is the policies that promote unemployment. The bearer of this unwelcome present seems to be the U.S. Forest Service. In fact, it is not too strong to say that in the small community of Wrangell, AK, a town I once lived in, the U.S. Forest Service is truly becoming the Grinch that stole Christmas and is stealing the hopes and dreams of many of the people in that community.

The Forest Service, under the Clinton administration, has canceled the contract that provided timber to the town's only year-round industry, a small sawmill. The Service has also been unresponsive in putting up independent sales to permit the sawmill to operate. For that reason, the timber industry in southeastern Alaska, an industry dependent upon wood from the Nation's largest national forest, the 17-million-acre Tongass National Forest, is being destroyed.

People live in the forest. Unlike in many areas where you have State and private timber, in our part of the country, towns such as Ketchikan, Wrangell, Petersburg, Juneau, and so forth, are all in the forest.

We have the situation, since the Clinton administration came to power more than 3 years ago, that more than 1,100 direct logging jobs have been lost, cutting timber employment by 42 percent. Environmental groups earlier

this year claimed loudly that the economy in southeastern Alaska did not need a timber industry, that everything was doing fine. They should tell the folks back in Wrangell, that 2,500 population town. The local newspaper a week ago filed for bankruptcy. This would end a continuous publication, for 93 years, of the Wrangell Sentinel, the longest continually published newspaper in our State. The paper is only the latest victim of the revenue loss caused for all businesses when the sawmill closed, costing more than 200 jobs in the community.

Besides the newspaper, there have been jobs lost in the machine shop, the transportation company, the markets, even the fixture of the community bar, the Stikine Bar. The unthinkable has happened. The bar is shut down, putting 12 people out of work.

This is the real result of the shortsighted Forest Service policies. These are not policies that will help the environment. According to the Forest Service draft of a revised Tongass Land Management Plan in 1993, enough timber could have been cut in southeast to keep all these people working with little effect, if any, on the environment. We are only seeking to harvest just 10 percent of the Tongass over a 100-year regrowth cycle, while nearly half the forest old growth is fully protected. Alaskans are seeking just to log 1.7 million acres of that forest—while nearly 7 million acres are fully protected in wilderness or other restricted areas.

We are currently working on a temporary fix that may help Wrangell and other southeast towns that depend on timber to have a hope of a brighter future. Hopefully, Congress will approve the fix and I pray that the President will sign it in the Interior appropriations bill later this week.

It will present a hope during the holidays for the thousands whose future depends on some level of logging in southeastern Alaska in the Tongass.

But the real solution, if residents of southeastern Alaska are to dream of brighter days ahead, is for the Clinton administration to begin to think about the real pain they are causing real people in my State and to permit a rational, environmentally sound logging policy to resume in the Tongass National Forest. Logging is a renewable resource if properly managed. I remind the Forest Service that they said this set of circumstances would never happen; they would be able to maintain a modest supply of timber to allow the industry to sustain itself. That has not happened.

If the Forest Service insists on stealing the Christmas of the people in Wrangell, and other towns in 1995, then in 1996 a bill that I have been working on all year with Senator STEVENS and Representative YOUNG to honor the terms of the 1990 compromise over logging in the Tongass is going to be back before this body. It is a present I intend to deliver to Alaskans before another Christmas passes.

Mr. President, I thank the Chair for the time allotted me. I wish the President a good day.

FLAG DESECRATION CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

The Senate continued with the consideration of the joint resolution Mr. BIDEN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If the Senator will withhold we are returning to Senate Joint Resolution 31.

Mr. BIDEN. That is what I wish to speak to, Mr. President.

Mr. President, we have had some discussion this morning, we will have some more discussions this afternoon, and some discussion tomorrow as well, on a constitutional amendment to protect the flag.

Nothing symbolizes what we might call our national spirit like the flag. In times of crisis it inspires us to do more. In times of tranquility it moves us to do better. And, at all times it unifies us in the face of our diversity and of our difference.

There are those who believe that we should not, under any circumstances, and no matter how it is worded, write an amendment into the Constitution to protect the flag because they believe there is no way to do that without damaging an even more cherished right, our right to say whatever we wish to say when we wish to say it without the Government acting as a censor, without the Government choosing among our words, which are appropriate and which are not.

I understand their view and I respect it. I believe, as strongly as I believe anything about this debate, that those against the amendment in question are no less patriotic, no more un-American, no less American, no better, no worse than those who share the view that the amendment in question is an appropriate way to protect the flag, which really means to speak to our national spirit and consensus that exists in America about what we stand for. The so-called culture norms people often speak to.

I respect their motives and I respect their views. But they are not mine. Although it is arguably not necessary to enshrine in the Constitution a way of protecting the flag, I believe that written properly, I believe stated properly, it can in fact legitimately be placed in the Constitution without doing damage to any of the other elements of our Constitution. But I should say up front that the amendment in question, in my view, does not do that. I say this as one who has made it his business here on the floor, along with my friend from Vermont, whom I see on the floor, and others, of sometimes being out of step in the minds of many people in terms of protecting the civil liberties of persons in this country to say what they wish to say, to publish what we do not wish them to publish, and to take actions we find reprehensible. But the Senator from Vermont, myself, and